



## And Now, The GBTC Invite: For More on This, It's Time for a Closer Look - USATF NE XC Grand Prix Race #2



Apologies to Seth Meyer. Hey, a bit late but always good to look back at the GBTC Invite and then look forward to the Brown Bear Invite, the critical race #3 on the GP. Get your spikes on for Saturday September 30 and make your way to Attleboro MA for a great event. For now, let's take a deep dive on the Greater Boston TC race, complete with pics. A whole photo portfolio of you great competitors is posted on USATF NE's website at <https://tinyurl.com/GBTCPhotos> Enjoy!

A humid day made for a blistering race, and the USATF NE harries were smokin' hot at the GBTC Invite on September 10. Between the three races, we had 196 competitors (over 200 registered!) sweating it out on the loopy 5k course at Great Brook Farm in Carlisle MA. Many were invited, all came to compete, and some took home pie.



After an energetic Youth race, the Men's 40+ event took center stage. Forty two awaited the gun start, taking off like rabid squirrels at the clarion call. There was no doubt about this one as HFC's TJ Unger ran with a vengeance, lengthening his lead with every lap, pumping across the line in 16:33 comfortably ahead of BAA's Aaron Price at 16:58, and reinvigorated Strider teammate Lee Danforth holding the fort in third.

No doubt the Age Grading score was on TJ's mind, the barometer for Grand Prix cash for this group. Though difficult to run alone, our winner noted he was "... running for the team. And we came out today for all of the races. Where's the pie? ". True dat as the HFC green machine pushed five finishers across the line within the top nine taking the 40+ Team competition in a landslide. Tracksmith edged out the Central Mass Striders with Greater Lowell's men rounding out the 40+ Team bracket. Speaking of Tracksmith, Captain Pumpitude Doug Hall lost his singlet. Again. At every race. If found, just keep it; he doesn't seem to need it.



It's all about Team in cross country, up and down the line in the men's scrap. CMS, led by Greg Putnam in 4th overall, countered in the 50+ Team battle, pushing HFC down to second and GLRR in third. Not to be outdone, Greater Lowell countered back (more counters than an industrial kitchen) with the 60+ Team crown, with Peter Lagoy shepherding the clean sweep over HFC. In the Age Grade, the grinnin' Greek Jason Cakouros pipped teammate Unger, reversing their Old Goat finish. On the [USATF NE XC Grand Prix summary scoring](#), Jason moves to the top, a mere 0.36 points ahead of TJ. Steve Brightman's strong 5th place AG score at GBTC keeps him firmly in third in the overall AG. Here's hoping John Barbour recovers from his injury that hobbled him at the race, and that he's ripped and ready to go at GP Race #3 - Brown Bear Invite on September 30. A pair of HFC Striders round out the overall Grand Prix AG Top Six. A big shout out to Bob Ruel of the Striders, first 70+ at GBTC. At 71, he's having a great season's start, protecting his 6th place overall GP AG cash position with a pair of CMS whippersnappers nipping at his heels. It's going to be a battle all Grand Prix for racing honors across the groups.

As they gathered for their start, the participants in the Men's Open race cheered in the tireless Ray Boutotte of the Gate City Striders to his finish. That's the community and competition that is cross country. No other sport comes close. Over seventy harriers carried on, with the finish remarkably similar to the just concluded race featuring a



different shade of green. A band of brothers formed quickly on the first lap, working off each other for the duration. With a final surge at the last 400 marker, Battle Road's Eli Moscowitz broke the pack and snapped the tape in 15:05, leading Tracksmith's Colin Cernik and fellow Battler Mike Durkin to the podium. Race winner Eli noted "... really glad to be back doing cross country. It's my favorite".

Likewise. Further, on the finish, "... we were all going back and forth. I took the chance on that last hill and went for it". The green singlets of Battle Road also took 5 out of the top 9 places, ensuring the Open Men's Team win. The 'smithies copped second place in the Open division, and a very competitive Old Goat TC grabbed the bronze. Glad to see the Cambridge RC in the XC house again, with speedster Matthew Pennock guiding the seven-man squad to the finish. They're back, and ready to kick grass.



Seven teams took home points at GBTC at GB, tightening up the overall Team scoring after two races. Still plenty of time to grab more Team points and go for the cash.



The ultimate race kicked off under gathering clouds, and then a wee bit of the rain. Braving the challenging but perhaps soothing sprinkles were the women runners of the [Association, where everyone knows it's windy](#) on the course. The largest field of the day featured 82 entrants throwing down. Quickly the race became an intra-team tussle between Battle Road's

Holly Rees and Anna Oeser, stride for stride most of the way. Only on the last turn entering the final straightway was it decided in Holly's favor as Anna ran wide off the curve. Battle Road dominated with seven of the top 10, broken by Tracksmith's Madison Yerke in third and host Greater Boston TC's Elise Jackson and Emma Newton in 5th and 8th. A healthy field of seven scoring teams split a pile of valuable GP points with gracious host GBTC grabbing second, followed by Tracksmith, HFC, Old Goat, Liberty and Greater Lowell.



Holly was quite generous and gave us a great interview and insight into the race and her future plans. Some snippets below:

- Holly, Battle Road is absolutely rocking with harriers this season. With your Individual race win, Battle Road took first place Team placing five in the top seven. Did you have a strategy, either individual or team, for this race?

*No special strategies, I was fortunate to run pretty much side by side with Anna for most of the race, it was great to have someone to go with.*

- In the Battle Road tent, there was some humorous talk of an emerging rivalry between you and Anna Oeser. Kidding aside, what's it like to be part of this team? Haha! Anna has run 20+ seconds faster than me in the track 5000m this past summer, so I don't think there is too much emerging rivalry - under most circumstances, Anna will win !!!! But, it is brilliant to do sessions together, especially this last summer for the track 5000 where we both set PBs. If Anna hadn't missed where the finishing chute was on Sunday we might have been able to make it to the finish line in exactly the same time. Being a part of the team is for sure important to me - I didn't run competitively in college so I learned all about cross country and track races from the Battle road team! I have been on the team since 2015, and, in fact BRTC is how I met my husband!!!

- Are you excited about the remainder of the USATF NE XC Grand Prix? You've missed one, but we count your four best races in the GP, so you are still in it after a perfect 100.00 score at GBTC. The USATF NE XC Championship on Nov 5 should be shockingly competitive, as will the Mayor's Cup on Oct 22 (both at Franklin Park). Since I'll be out of town for two more of the races, I won't be able to strive for a perfect score! I think the series is awesome, though, it really helps to get folks excited for cross country running and racing. I'm excited to run Lone Gull 10k, and definitely the Franklin Park cross country races like Mayor's Cup and USATF-NEs.

There was quite the crowd at the finish line with so many competitors. One joyous sight was Jennifer Lutz stopping the clock as the first 40+ runner in fourth place overall.

Impressive, especially since she was greeted by her kids in the chute shouting, "nice job, Mom!" Never too exhausted for a hug from your kids. Love it. Close behind was Christina Campbell from HFC and Liberty's Helen Bresler. For the day, Liberty took all three senior Team honors, the 40+, the 50+, and the 60+. By now you should know that ya' need three to finish in these Team age groups to count, as a few stellar individual performances fell by the wayside at Great Brook. Greater Lowell worked the strategy perfectly, taking second to Liberty in all three groups, and Gate City's ever increasing presence took third in the 40+. For the 50+, GLRR's Kara Haas continued her streak with the overall group win, with

Christine Crowley of Liberty and Julie Mullaney of Tackmsith following. On another streak is Mary Cass, repeat winner of the 60+ gang, with her Liberty maties Amanda King and Victoria Bok bringing the brooms to sweep the field.





On to the Age Grade results for the day and the GP. Mary Cass really poured it on at GBTC, with an AG score of 87.63, besting teammate Amanda King's 82.48. What a performance for Mary! That widens the gap to nearly seven points in the overall AG GP score. Let's see if Jennifer Lutz's third place AG score of 81.41 holds up for the GP, where you can drop your lowest score. Stalwarts Haas (81.28) and Campbell (79.05) held their own on the course, cementing third and fourth place, respectively, in the overall AG GP. A trio from Liberty - Lauren Leslie, Victoria Bok, and Christine Crowley - all scored above a 78.00 to round out some great performances at GBTC. Not enough, though, to displace Alda Cossi and Helen Bresler (yes, both from Liberty) in the overall AG GP standings. They're still in the money. Meanwhile, everyone enjoyed the fruits of their labor, concluding a wonderful day.....



It's going to go on all season, so keep competing. Best 4 scores count in all Individual scoring categories (must race NE Champs). For Teams everything counts, with a minimum of three races including NE Champs required. With race #3 coming up, new Teams can still earn some dollars as there are two open award slots: Women's 40+ fourth place, Women's 50+ third place. These Teams need only three runners to score, with all ages scoring down, e.g. a 60+ contender will score for their 40+, 50+, and 60+ Team! Don't leave your money on the table.

Be sure to register for the next two races in the XC GP - [Brown Bear Invitational](#) and the [WaylandXC Festival](#). Consecutive weekends, so we'll need to suck it up. And that's all there is, so I'd like to introduce your new USATF NE Cross Country Sports Chair - Fran Cusick. He is a teacher, a coach, a runner, and a very enthusiastic supporter of our

sport. He's also the Methuselah of Battle Road TC at age 37, meaning he's got many years ahead of him as XC Chair.

From me, a great and hearty thanks to you all for letting me advocate for you and the great community and competition that is XC. It's been an incredible 5-year run. I've met so many inspirational and passionate folks, you have lifted me up at every moment and it's been an absolute gas working with you. We all love cross country, and that's why I sought this position in 2018. I felt the Association was not supporting or even acknowledging the strength and popularity of the sport. Despite increasing participation year over year, our budget was slashed that year while others grew. And our Grand Prix was not even announced until August. I thought we deserved better. I hope I have represented you, listened to you, and improved our little corner of the running world. Still a lot of work to do. I'll be there in any way Fran needs me. Now, time to get back in shape and race off your shoulder for a change. See you on the dark side of the moon. Stride on!

